



Roll up your sleeves: Kids' turn arrives for COVID-19 shots

By LINDSEY TANNER AP
Medical Writer

Hugs with friends. Birthday parties indoors. Pillow fights. School children who got their first COVID-19 shots Wednesday said these are the pleasures they look forward to as the U.S. enters a major new phase in fighting the pandemic. Health officials hailed shots for kids aged 5 to 11 as a major breakthrough after more than 18 months of illness, hospitalizations, deaths and disrupted education. Kid-sized doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine cleared two final hurdles Tuesday — a recommendation from CDC advisers, followed by a green light from Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At a Decatur, Geor-

gia, pediatrician's office Wednesday, 10-year-old Mackenzie Olson took off her black leather jacket and rolled up her sleeve as her mother looked on.

"I see my friends but not the way I want to. I want to hug them, play games with them that we don't normally get to," and have a pillow fight with her best friend, Mackenzie said after getting her shot at the Children's Medical Group site. With the federal government promising enough vaccine to protect the nation's 28 million kids in this age group, pediatricians' offices and hospitals began inoculating children, with schools, pharmacies and other locations planning to follow suit in the days ahead.

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Continued from Front

Brian Giglio, 40, of Alexandria, Virginia, brought his 8-year-old son Carter in for vaccination at Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C., where kids with underlying conditions were given first dibs. The boy has Type 1 diabetes that puts him at risk for complications if he were to become infected.

"Carter is the last in our house to get vaccinated and he was always the one that we had the most concern about," Giglio said. "And so today is like a hallway pass for us to begin living life again and we couldn't be more thankful to everybody that's been involved in this process to helping us feel that freedom that we feel today." Carter said he can't wait to leave masks behind once he's fully vaccinated, so he can smell the things he used to be able to smell without it.

"I'm ready to trash it," he said, though the CDC still recommends masks in schools and indoor public spaces where virus activity is high, even for the fully vaccinated.

Cate Zeigler-Amon, 10, arrived with her mom and was first in line Wednesday for a drive-through vaccination at Viral Solutions in Atlanta. The girl bounced around the car in excitement before the shot, which she broadcast live on her computer during morning announcements at her elementary school. Afterward, Cate said she was "very, very, very excited and very happy," looking forward to hugging her friends and celebrating her birthday indoors next month "instead of having a freezing cold outside birthday party."

Hartford Hospital in Connecticut vaccinated seven youngsters Tuesday night, minutes after CDC's direc-

tor gave the OK, and three more early Wednesday. Mostly staffers' children, the kids were waiting on standby for the CDC announcement, said Eric Arlia, senior pharmacy director for Hartford HealthCare in Connecticut.

One girl squeezed her eyes shut and a little boy barely flinched as they got their shots and other waiting kids applauded, local media video showed.

"It feels like another important step on the journey to being able to vaccinate as many people as we can and put the pandemic to an end," Arlia said.

The vaccine — one-third the dose given to older children and adults and administered with kid-sized needles — requires two doses three weeks apart, plus two more weeks for full protection. That means children who get vaccinated before Thanksgiving will be covered by Christmas.

"The timing before winter holidays is very fortunate," said Dr. Jennifer Shu, whose Children's Medical Group office in Decatur, Georgia, began vaccinating first thing Wednesday. "This age group will be able to spend holidays with friends and family more safely than they have been able to since the start of the pandemic."

Sarah Kerr's two children, ages 6 and 7, are Shu's patients and she hopes to get them vaccinated by week's end. Her kindergarten son has a chromosome disorder, receives special education and would be at risk for severe illness if he got infected, Kerr said.

"My son, who can't wear a mask and has been fully dependent on those around him to protect him, it will give him a line of defense," Kerr said. "My daughter has had to sit out on some social things because we've had to be so careful for his

sake. She's been so understanding but it has been hard on her."

Thousands of pediatricians pre-ordered doses, and Pfizer began shipments soon after the Food and Drug Administration's decision Friday to authorize emergency use. Pfizer said it expects to make 19,000 shipments totaling about 11 million doses in the next several days, and millions more will be available to order on a weekly basis.

Authorities said they expected a smooth roll-out, unlike the chaos that plagued the national roll-out of vaccines for adults nearly a year ago.

Walgreens planned to start kids' vaccinations on Saturday and said parents could sign up starting Wednesday online or by calling 1-800-Walgreens. CVS was also accepting appointments online and by phone at select pharmacies starting Sunday.

Many locations planned mass vaccination events in coming days. And while many pediatricians' offices were expecting strong demand at least initially, almost two-thirds of parents recently polled by the Kaiser Family Foundation said they would either wait or not seek out the vaccines for their kids.

Hannah Hause, a Colorado mother of four children ages 2, 5, 7 and 8, is among those not in any rush. She's vaccinated but wants more time to see how the child vaccines play out and are studied in the larger childhood population.

"It's not studied long-term. It just makes me nervous because that's my whole world," she said of her children.

"As long as I can wait, I will wait," she said.

Walensky said she understood parents' fears but said "we've taken the time to get this right." She said

clinical trials in children showed "no severe events" associated with the vaccine.

"The benefits of this vaccine so much outweigh the risks of COVID itself," Walensky told "CBS Mornings" on Wednesday.

Government authorities said pediatricians and family doctors, whom parents depend on to give routine childhood vaccinations, could help build trust.

Dr. Ada Stewart, a Black family physician in Columbia, South Carolina, works at a clinic for underserved patients that has been giving COVID-19 shots to adults and teens and said she's ready to add younger children to the mix. She's seen the toll the virus has taken on them — not just in family illness and death but with school disruptions, slipping grades and mental strain. School closures throughout the pandemic have disproportionately burdened children of color, widening academic gaps and worsening mental health, according to data presented Tuesday to CDC advisers. That data showed more than 2,000 COVID-related school closures in just the first two months of the current school year. Advocates say getting school-aged kids vaccinated will reduce those disruptions.

But Stewart thinks demand for kids' shots will be mixed.

"Because many of my patients are Black, Indigenous and people of color, I've seen the full spectrum," from parents eager to get their children vaccinated to those who are more hesitant "because of a history of mistrust in the medical community," said Stewart, past president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Her message to both is the same: "Vaccines work, they're safe, they're effective and they save lives,"

she said.

A Pfizer study of 2,268 children found the vaccine was almost 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infections. The FDA examined 3,100 vaccinated kids in concluding the shots are safe.

Some skeptics have questioned the need for kids to get vaccinated since they are less likely than adults to develop severe COVID-19. But with the delta variant, they get infected and transmit "just as readily as adults do," Dr. Anthony Fauci said at a recent White House briefing. Infected kids have contributed to the U.S. toll — almost 46 million infections and more than 740,000 deaths. Since the pandemic began, at least 94 children aged 5 to 11 have died from COVID-19, more than 8,300 have been hospitalized and over 5,000 have developed a serious inflammatory condition linked to the coronavirus. Black and Latino youngsters and those with chronic conditions are among the hardest hit.

But while some health authorities say minorities should be over-represented in COVID-19 vaccine studies because they are disproportionately affected by the virus, nearly 80% of kids in Pfizer's study were white.

Black youngsters totaled 6%, Latinos 21%, Asians 6% and less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska or Hawaii natives.

Kye'vontay Jordan, 7, who is Black, has diabetes and his shot at Children's National in Washington, D.C., gave his dad peace of mind.

"Now I can sleep not worrying about him going to school," said Brian Jordan. "Being exposed to the coronavirus could really affect him and mess him up."



Sears becomes Virginia's 1st female lieutenant governor

By MATTHEW BARAKAT Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) —

Republican Winsome Sears, who returned to Virginia politics after an absence of nearly two decades, has become the first female lieutenant governor and the first woman of color to win statewide office in Virginia.

Sears defeated Democrat Hala Ayala in Tuesday's election. Ayala also would have been the first woman of color to hold statewide office if she had won.

The Republican rocketed out of political obscurity earlier this year when she won the GOP nomination on the strength of a campaign photo in which she posed holding a military rifle.

A former Marine, Sears had a brief stint in electoral politics 20 years ago as a one-term delegate in the General Assembly, representing parts of Hampton Roads. Her return to politics after a two-decade absence began when she served as national chairperson for Black Americans to Re-Elect President Trump.

Sears will succeed Democrat Justin Fairfax, who unsuccessfully ran for governor. The marquee election Tuesday was the gubernatorial

race, which Republican candidate Glenn Youngkin won, defeating former Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

Early Wednesday, Sears stood with her family in front of cheering supporters at a victory party in Chantilly, saying, "What you are looking at is the American Dream."

Throughout the race, Sears also highlighted her background as a Jamaican immigrant, campaigning against illegal immigration and rejecting the notion that the nation is plagued by systemic racism.

"In case you haven't noticed, I am Black and I have been Black all my life," she said. "But that's not what this is about. What we are going to do is we are now going to be about the business of the commonwealth. We have things to tend to."

She said she will work to fully fund historically Black colleges and implement Youngkin's agenda.

"He's going to get rid of all kinds of taxes," she said.

During the campaign, Ayala criticized Sears for refusing to say whether she had been vaccinated against the coronavirus. Sears ridiculed mask mandates during the primary.

Sears won despite being badly outgunned financially — reports showed Ayala's campaign more than doubled Sears in fundraising, with \$6.4 million raked in by Ayala, compared with \$2.6 million for Sears.

Sears' role as a tiebreaking vote in a closely divided state Senate has become even more important after Tuesday's results. Republicans won the governor's mansion, and the GOP is also claiming that it has regained control of the House of Delegates, though several key races are still too early to call.

If Republicans do gain control of the House, the only thing blocking them from total control of state government is a narrow 21-19 Democratic advantage in the state Senate. Senators are not up for reelection until 2023. If Republicans can pick up just one centrist Democrat on key pieces of legislation, Sears could be the tiebreaking vote to ensure passage.

Democrats have been particularly concerned about abortion legislation. Ayala made supporting a woman's right to an abortion a key issue in her campaign, noting that the Senate is already an even 20-20 split on the issue. That's because



Democrat Joe Morrissey has voted against some legislation that would have expanded abortion rights in the state.

Sears has long opposed abortion, something she links to her Christian faith.

"I'm a Christian first, and a Republican second. I don't want to hear about your economic policies and you're going to build the country if we have to kill babies along the way," she told an interviewer in 2019. For attorney general, Democrat Mark Herring was seeking a third term against Republican Jason Miyares, a delegate from Virginia Beach. Herring would be the first attorney general to win a third term since World War II. The race was still too early to call.

Miyares, the son of a Cu-

ban immigrant, declared victory early Wednesday, saying he is now the first Latino to be elected statewide in Virginia.

"I can't wait to go to work with Governor Youngkin and Lieutenant Governor Sears for you," Miyares said. Herring had not conceded defeat as of Wednesday afternoon.

Jurisdictions throughout the state reported high turnout, with roughly 3.3 million ballots tallied by 3 a.m. Wednesday. That greatly exceeded the 2.6 million ballots cast in the last gubernatorial election in 2017, which itself was a high turnout year. The turnout in 2017 was in part a backlash to Donald Trump's 2016 election. Democrats swept all three statewide elections in 2017. □

Virginia Beach OKs \$568 million bond to fend off rising seas

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

Voters in Virginia Beach have approved one of the larger bonds in the U.S. to pay for infrastructure projects to guard against rising seas and intensifying hurricanes, suggesting that more Americans are finally willing to spend tax dollars to adapt to climate change.

Tuesday's "yes" vote earned nearly 73% support in the coastal city of about 450,000 people, according to unofficial results from the Virginia Department of Elections.

"The script flipped on this a few years ago throughout coastal Virginia," said Skip Stiles, executive director of Wetlands Watch, a Virginia-based environmental group that partners with local governments on climate change issues.

"Everybody now is going, 'Hmmm, I think we better deal with this. There's something going on here, and it's not just one of these periods of bad storms,'" Stiles said.

The \$568 million bond will fund anything from elevating roads to the closing a 100-acre (40-hectare) city golf course to collect storm water. There are also plans for more water pumping stations to reduce flooding.

Property taxes are expected to rise by \$115 to \$171 a year for a home of median assessed value, city officials say.

The land in Virginia Beach is sinking and the seas are rising at an alarming rate. Since 1960, sea levels have risen by nearly a foot (0.3 meter). And they're likely to rise by 1.5 feet to 3 feet (0.5 to 1 meter) over the next half-century.

Much of Virginia Beach sits on low coastal plains. Water can drain slowly into tidal rivers and tributaries, sometimes with nowhere to go during heavy rains and high tides.

In 2016, 1,400 homes and businesses flooded following weeks of rain that culminated with the remnants of Hurricane Matthew. Homes that are miles from the city's beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay were inundated for the first time as drainage systems became overwhelmed.

Similar weather events preceded bond issues passing in other cities.

For instance, the Houston area passed \$2.5 billion in bonds to pay for flood-control projects in 2018, a year after Hurricane Harvey. In 2017, Miami voters approved nearly \$200 million in

bonds to pay for flood-control measures the wake of Hurricane Irma.

The flood-control projects in Virginia Beach could help the city avoid up to \$8 billion in losses to flooding as well as associated economic impacts in the coming decades, according to a report from Old Dominion University. The losses would be equivalent to about a quarter of Virginia Beach's gross domestic product — or its total output of goods and services.

"As flooding becomes more prevalent, insurers will raise premiums, refuse coverage and at some point exit Virginia Beach entirely," economics professor Robert McNab told The Associated Press last week.

"Businesses will have more difficulty in moving goods to market and, of course, residents will have more problems moving around the region."

But the bond in Virginia Beach will not put an end to the city's flooding woes. The money will cover only a third of what's needed overall to protect against 1.5 feet of sea-level rise, said John Moss, a city councilman who was a large force behind the referendum. □

Murphy, Ciattarelli nearly tied in New Jersey governor race

By **MIKE CATALINI** Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy and Republican Jack Ciattarelli on Wednesday were locked in what amounts to a tie in the New Jersey governor's race, with both candidates buckling up for a close finish likely to be contested by the loser.

The Associated Press has not yet declared a winner in the contest, which was too early to call. But Murphy had a lead of less than a percentage point in incomplete results as county elections officials continued to count ballots.

The closeness of the race has surprised experts, who watched public polls showing Murphy leading comfortably and looked to his party's registration advantage of more than a million voters.

"If you asked anybody several months ago within the state, I think anyone would have predicted a high double digit landslide for Murphy," said Ashley Koning, director of the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling.

New Jersey does not have an automatic recount law, but the candidates are permitted to request one. The party that wants a re-



count has to file a suit in State Superior Court in the counties where they want to contest tallies. That has to be done within 17 days of Election Day.

By Wednesday morning, it was clear the results of the elections delivered bad omens for Democrats, with Republicans capturing the Virginia governor's seat.

Headwinds facing Democrats, like President Joe Biden's falling approval ratings and congressional Democrats' struggles to enact their agenda didn't factor heavily enough into

some experts' pre-election analysis, said Ben Dworkin, the director of Rowan University's Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship. He counted himself among them.

The close result also reflected exasperated voters, who were looking for an outlet to vent, he added.

"If you're frustrated with just your life right now, COVID requirements, your job, your business, the cost of living, then this was your first chance to express your frustration," he said.

Murphy's campaign cen-

tered on the progressive agenda he shepherded through the Democrat-led Legislature in his first term, delivering on promises like hiking the minimum wage, taxing millionaires and legalizing recreational marijuana, among others.

But the tug of political history was on the governor's mind.

No Democrat has been re-elected governor of New Jersey since 1977, and the party opposite the president's has won the seat going back more than three decades. Unlike experts,

he grasped that the race could be close, saying he was running as if he were the underdog.

"I mean history has proven that this could be a very fickle year in terms of politics," Murphy said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "The New Jersey election is overwhelmingly either a referendum on or a reaction to the presidential that just came before. I think we can all agree that was the most unusual presidential we've ever seen. How it impacts us? I do not know. But I know it adds more volatility, more uncertainty, yet another reason for us to run like we're 10 points down and that's exactly what we're doing."

Ciattarelli, too, was preparing for a close race. His spokesperson said Wednesday that the campaign was focused on counting votes.

In the run up to the election, he reminded voters during one rally that Republican Tom Kean Sr. won the governorship by a narrow margin in 1981.

"It's OK if it's close because as we say in sports a win is a win. But let us not — let us not — wake up on the morning of Nov. 3 and have lost by 1,797 votes," Ciattarelli said. □

Voters say 'yes' to early closing time for South Beach bars

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP)

— Last call could come three hours earlier in Miami Beach, where a majority of voters fed up with nighttime violence chose "Yes" to rolling back the 5 a.m. closing time for alcohol sales.

The voter referendum was held Tuesday in response to increasingly raucous crowds and public drinking in the South Beach entertainment district, where tension has been bubbling for years as party crowds grew from a few weekends into a year-round presence.

It worsened during the pandemic when city officials closed the main drag to vehicles and allowed restaurants to offer more outdoor seating along Ocean

Drive.

The city imposed an 8 p.m. curfew during spring break, when more than 1,000 people were arrested. But it wasn't entirely clear how much support such measures had among citizens in a city that depends on tourism.

Mayor Dan Gelber, who pushed for a 2 a.m. closing time, also won reelection on Tuesday. He declared victory for both campaigns. "This is what our residents want," Gelber said. He called the earlier limit to alcohol sales a first step toward repositioning South Beach's entertainment district as a "live, work, play" area with new housing, offices and cultural spaces.

The city's commissioners

had agreed to a temporary restriction of early-morning alcohol sales in South Beach last summer. Now city staff must develop legislation to codify the referendum. Gelber said he expects commissioners to support such measures now that voters have spoken.

In 2017, voters rejected a similar proposal for a 2 a.m. alcohol sales ban on South Beach's Ocean Drive, the Miami Herald reported. Exemptions are possible — Gelber said he would be open to letting bigger hotels with security staffs continue serving alcohol until 5 a.m.

Critics said the earlier cutoff would cost the city millions without stopping crime.

South Beach club owners poured \$675,000 into a failed campaign to kill the referendum, the newspaper reported.

"Today's non-binding straw poll was an attempt at misdirection by leaders who have failed to stem the growing problems of crime

on Miami Beach," said a statement from Citizens for a Safe Miami Beach, which plans to "oppose solutions that do nothing to solve crime, but will cost 4,100 local workers their jobs, increase property taxes, and cut tens of millions of dollars from city revenues." □



Ukrainians protest against vaccination as COVID cases soar

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — More than a thousand people blocked several streets in the center of the Ukrainian capital Wednesday, protesting against COVID-19 vaccine certificates and state-imposed restrictions aimed at halting the spread of the coronavirus.

The protesters, mostly women and young people, didn't wear masks and held up signs reading "Say No to COVID Passports", "Say No to COVID Genocide" in front of the Ukrainian parliament building in Kyiv.

The rally comes in response to restrictions that require teachers, government employees and other workers to get fully vaccinated by Nov. 8 or have their salaries suspended.

Last week, Ukrainian authorities also started requiring proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test results for people boarding airplanes, trains and long-distance buses.

The measures come as Ukraine reports a record-high level of new infections and deaths from the coronavirus.

Authorities have mainly blamed the surge on widespread public reluctance to get vaccinated. Ukrainians can freely choose between the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Sinovac vaccines, but just about 17.1% of the 41-million population has been fully vaccinated, which is Europe's second-lowest rate after Armenia.

"I don't want to participate in an experiment on myself, but I am deprived of the right to choose," said Tamara Ustinova, 35, a teacher from Mariupol. "The authorities force Ukrainians to get vaccinated, creating unbearable conditions, but the danger of genetic mutations is much greater than the harm from COVID."



The police did not interfere with the rally, which was supported by ex-lawmaker Nadiya Savchenko who was detained at an airport a few weeks ago with a fake vaccination certificate.

"The authorities will only aggravate the situation further," Savchenko said at the rally. "You have the right to move freely around the country, this is everyone's right."

Savchenko and the protesters held several prayers in front of the parliament building. The government says that some denominations oppose vaccination, and false rumors about vaccines containing microchips, causing gene mutations or

infertility are circulating among believers.

New government regulations and restrictions have spawned a booming black market for counterfeit documents. Fake vaccination certificates are selling for the equivalent of \$100-300, and there have been reports of a fake version of a government digital app with fake certificates already installed.

Authorities have opened 1,065 criminal cases over the distribution of fake certificates involving 80 doctors and 35 travel agencies. Police have blocked 40 websites that offered fake certificates.

Parliament has proposed to make

the use and production of fake certificates a separate criminal offence, punishable by up to three years in prison or a fine of about \$6,460. A bill to that effect has already been supported by lawmakers in the first reading on Tuesday. "The anti-vaccination spirit quickly disappears in intensive care, and fake certificates do not work there," Health Minister Viktor Lyashko said at a briefing. "Calls not to get vaccinated are, in my opinion, a mockery of our doctors and families who have lost their relatives." In total, Ukraine has reported 2,979,086 coronavirus cases and 69,447 deaths. □

Egypt's leader orders government to move to new capital

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's president on Wednesday ordered his administration to start moving its offices next month to a sprawling new administrative capital in the desert outside Cairo, a spokesman said.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi has directed the government to begin a six-month trial period of working from the new complex starting Dec. 1, according to his spokesman, Bassam Radi.

The \$45 billion city is biggest of the mega-projects el-Sissi has launched since taking office in 2014. It is being built on 170,000 acres about 28 miles (about 45 kilometers) east of Cairo and nearly twice its size. It is planned to house 6.5 million people.

Critics have called the new capital a vanity project, arguing its cost could have been better put to rebuilding the wrecked economy and refurbishing Cairo.

But the government has argued that the new capital is needed to absorb the booming population of Cairo, which will double to 40 million by 2050. The president also said that the new capital, and other projects ranging from new roads and housing complexes to a Suez Canal expansion, attract investors and create jobs for the country's more than 100 million people.

The city will house the presidency, Cabinet, Parliament and ministries. Planners promise a 21-mile-long public park, an airport, an opera

house, a sports complex and 20 skyscrapers, including Africa's highest, at 345 meters (about 1,132 feet). The state-run Al-Ahram daily reported that the government had planned to relocate 52,300 government employees to the new capital by mid-2020, but its plans were delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

El-Sissi said earlier this year that moving the government to the new capital would "herald a new era of modern government work." He was referring to advanced technology used to build government offices there.

The shift of the seat of power outside Cairo will be the first since the Muslim conquest in the 7th Century. □

Myanmar court denies bail for US journalist, adds new charge

BANGKOK (AP) — A court in Myanmar on Wednesday rejected the bail application of Danny Fenster, an American journalist jailed for the past five months, and added a new charge against him, his lawyer said. Fenster had already been charged with incitement for allegedly spreading false or inflammatory information, an offense punishable by up to three years in prison. He is also charged with violating the Unlawful Associations Act for alleged links to illegal opposition groups, which carries a possible two-to-three year prison term.

His lawyer, Than Zaw Aung, said a new charge of violating immigration law was added Wednesday, under a catch-all provision that calls for a prison term of six months to five years for violating visa conditions.

The court's actions come during a visit to Myanmar by Bill Richardson, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He said he is on a mission to discuss humanitarian aid to strife-torn Myanmar with leaders of



its military-installed government.

Myanmar has been mired in violence and civil unrest since the military seized power in February, ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Protesters against the takeover who faced beatings, shootings and arrests have turned increasingly to armed resis-

tance, and insurgents are active in many parts of the country.

Richardson's visit raised hopes that he might seek Fenster's release because he is known for his past efforts to gain the freedom of Americans detained in countries with which Washington has poor relations, such as North Korea.

The United States is highly critical of army rule in Myanmar and has instituted diplomatic and economic sanctions targeting its military leadership.

Fenster, managing editor of the online news magazine Frontier Myanmar, was detained at Yangon International Airport on May 24 as he was about to board

a flight to go to the Detroit area in the United States to see his family. It is still unclear why he was arrested, though the charges involve his work at his previous employer, another online news service, which he left in the middle of last year.

His lawyer said his application for release on bail on the sedition charge was rejected Wednesday by the judge, who said it is not allowed under the law.

Than Zaw Aung also said he cross-examined seven prosecution witnesses on Wednesday for the incitement and unlawful association charges, including police and airport security personnel.

He did not provide details of their testimony.

The hearings at the court at Yangon's Insein Prison, where Fenster is jailed, are closed to the media and the public. The defense has not yet presented its case.

The judge ruled Wednesday that the court will hold sessions every weekday starting this Friday in order to expedite the trial, Than Zaw Aung said. □

Officials tell AP that Iran seized Vietnamese oil tanker

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran seized a Vietnamese-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman last month and still holds the vessel, two U.S. officials told The Associated Press on Wednesday, revealing the latest provocation in Mideast waters as tensions escalate between Iran and the United States over Tehran's nuclear program.

One of the officials said that Iran's powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard troops took control of the MV Southys on Oct. 24 at gunpoint. U.S. forces had monitored the seizure, but ultimately didn't take action as the vessel sailed into Iranian waters.

A motive for the seizure remains unclear. Officials at the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Ship-tracking data analyzed by the AP from MarineTraffic.

com showed the vessel still off Iran's southern port of Bandar Abbas on Tuesday. The two U.S. officials spoke on condition of anonymity as the information had yet to be made public amid ongoing attempts to restart talks over Iran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Negotiations have stalled in Vienna since the election of hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi in June, allowing Iran to press ahead with its nuclear program and raising alarm in Western capitals. Iran's top nuclear negotiator said last week that talks would resume in November, but didn't provide a specific date.

The officials spoke to AP after Iranian state television offered a series of contradictory reports about a confrontation between the Guard and the U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet. State TV sought to cast the

incident as an act of American aggression against Iran in the Gulf of Oman, with the U.S. Navy detaining a tanker carrying Iranian oil and the Guard freeing it and bringing it back to the Islamic Republic.

The U.S. officials dismissed Iran's version of events. Tehran also did not provide details of the ship's name, nor any explanation of why the Navy might target it. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The deluge of Iranian claims came as the Islamic Republic prepared to mark the 42nd anniversary of the 1979 takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, which triggered the 444-day hostage crisis and bred decades of acrimony.

Iranian officials heralded the ship's impoundment as a heroic act, with Raisi lauding the Revolutionary

Guard on Twitter. The country's oil minister, Javad Owji, thanked the Guard for "rescuing the Iranian oil tanker from American pirates."

State TV released footage showing an Iranian surveillance drone monitoring a hulking red tanker in the Gulf of Oman. Heavily armed Iranian commandos then rappelled onto the boat from a helicopter as small speedboats surrounded the vessel and an Iranian catamaran ship patrolled the waters.

The status and makeup of the Southys' crew wasn't immediately known. A shipping database showed the vessel's last registered owner as OPEC Petrol Transportation Co., a firm with a Hanoi address. A telephone number for the company could not immediately be found.

Iran's seizure of the Southys would be the latest in a string of hijackings and ex-

plosions to roil the Gulf of Oman, which sits near the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all traded oil passes.

The U.S. Navy blamed Iran for a series of limpet mine attacks on vessels that damaged tankers in 2019, as well as for a fatal drone attack on an Israeli-linked oil tanker that killed two European crew members earlier this year. Just a few months ago, Iranian hijackers stormed and briefly captured a Panama-flagged asphalt tanker off the United Arab Emirates.

Tehran denies carrying out the attacks, but a wider shadow war between Iran and the West has played out in the region's volatile waters since then-President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from Iran's nuclear deal in 2018 and imposed crushing sanctions on the country. □

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UK official warns of hard months ahead amid high COVID rates

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — England's deputy chief medical officer said Wednesday that too many people believe the pandemic is over, warning that the U.K.'s very high coronavirus rates and rising deaths mean that there are "hard months to come in the winter."

Jonathan Van-Tam also said he was worried that increasing numbers of deaths showed infections were "now starting to penetrate into older age groups."

Coronavirus "rates are still very high at the moment. They are higher than in most of Europe," Van-Tam told the BBC. "We are running quite hot. And, of course, it's of concern to scientists that we are running this hot this early in the autumn season."

"I personally feel there are some hard months to come in the winter and it's not over," he added.

The British government reported 41,299 new COVID-19 cases and 217 deaths Wednesday. The country recorded its highest daily death toll since February - 293 - on Tuesday.

While new cases have been dropping from around 46,000 a day in October, infection rates in Britain are still much higher than in most of Europe.

Van-Tam said the drop in case numbers mainly reflected the ebbing of a surge recently seen among teenagers. He warned that while hospital admissions have plateaued and total numbers of pa-



tients in hospitals have slightly gone down, the overall picture was still worrying.

"This could be a pause before things go up, it could be the very first signs that things are beginning to stabilize but at a high rate," he said. "But my worry is that the deaths are increasing and that shows that the infection is now starting to penetrate into those older age groups." The U.K. got a head-start in rolling out its vaccination program, and most adults have been fully inocu-

lated. A booster shot is being offered to millions, including everyone over 50. But the government has been cautious about vaccinating teenagers and younger people, authorizing jabs for healthy children between 12 to 15 years old only this September.

Jeremy Brown, a member of the government's vaccination advisory committee, said it was "far too early" to follow the lead of the United States in vaccinating children 11 years old and under.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government lifted almost all coronavirus restrictions in July, including mandatory face coverings and social distancing requirements. Nightclubs and crowded venues were allowed to fully open and the work from home advice was scrapped.

Authorities have resisted calls to reimpose restrictions like mandatory mask-wearing, and are instead relying heavily on vaccines to keep infections down. □

France bids 'adieu' to Merkel, awards her Legion of Honor

BEAUNE, France (AP) —

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was feted by France on Wednesday in a special farewell ceremony honoring her leadership and partnership.

French President Emmanuel Macron was to award Merkel with the Great Cross of the Legion of Honor as part of her "adieu" visit to the historic Burgundy town of Beaune.

Macron and his wife Brigitte joined Merkel and her husband Joachim Sauer for a visit to the Hospices de Beaune, a medieval hospital that is now a museum and surrounding vineyards, and for a piano recital at the Vougeot Chateau.

The event is also seen as a gesture of friendship between France and Germany, long-time foes whose

partnership is at the heart of the European Union.

Macron is the fourth French president to hold office since Merkel took power in 2005.

Merkel is leaving office after 16 years in power. The three parties that hope to form Germany's new government say they aim to have the country's next chancellor in place in early December. □



LOCAL



Now Trending: Gelatissimo Bus at Gianni's Plaza



PALM BEACH — For the pre-opening of the gelatissimo bus, gelatissimo hosted a “draw your own gelato bus” competition among the youth. The marketing team contacted SKOA to have ten participating elementary schools from each district (St. Paulus School, St. Franciscus College, St. Dominicus College, Maria Goretti College,

Colegio Laura Wernet Paskel, Rosario College, Colegio Cristo Rey, St. Anna School and Paso Pa Futuro) and of the ten schools that participated, four schools, eight winners, were selected to join a celebratory event hosted at Gianni's Ristorante Italiano and the Gelatissimo bus.



During the event, the students received complimentary gelatos and pizza, face painting, beverages and a surprise performance by none other than our beloved artist, Jeon. The event was a roaring success, and the students truly enjoyed the festivities and left feeling entertained.

After the pre-opening festivities for the students, the Gelatissimo Bus officially opened its doors for the public with the cool new after dinner dining concept at the forefront. The dual-level gelatissimo bus offers indoor and outdoor seating options for gelato-diners.

Upon arrival, gelato-diners are welcomed and served by a friendly host, then have the option to dine upstairs with a beautiful view overlooking the Palm Beach strip or next to the bus on the plaza.

The gelatissimo bus also offers various gelato goodness on its menu, from popsicles to sandwiches, bon bons, various gelato flavors served in cones or cups with delicious toppings of your choice, coffee or tea and other beverage options.

The gelatissimo bus is definitely the newest must visit after dinner option for something sweet with its welcoming environment, chic décor, nightly live entertainment option from local and international artist, indoor and outdoor dining option with views to match, right in the heart of the Palm Beach Strip, open daily from 5PM – 11:30PM. □

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Aruba to me

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □

Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami suspends its sterilization campaign for 2021

ORANJESTAD — For years Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami has been serving the community by helping in reducing the number of suffering and abandoned dogs and cats on our island. With help of its contributors, Stimami Sterilisami sterilized approximately 26.397 dogs and cats between 2016 and 2021. All this at a cost of over Awg. 3 million.

However, with a heavy heart, we regret to inform that our funds have been depleted. Our sponsors are unable to make donations this year and Aruba Bank's donation of Awg. 10.000 and Mr. Ewald Biemans, owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach resort and President of Stimami Sterilisami foundation, personal donation of Awg. 100.000 is not sufficient to continue any longer.

Now more than ever the efforts of this foundation are necessary seeing that there are more and more pets on the streets abandoned and without owners. Sterilization is the most effective and compassionate method to reduce the numbers of stray dogs and cats. Without sterilization a cat is able to give birth to 62 kittens in a year and dogs up to 28 puppies, this will make all the hard work this foundation has been doing throughout the years in vain.

"We tried doing as much

as we could this year and we looked everywhere on how to get funds, but unfortunately expense continue and no funds received," says Biemans.

For that reason, as of June 15th, 2021, Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami had to take the hard decision to suspend its activities until new funds are received from past and future contributors for the national campaign of sterilization of pets.

"This decision truly saddens us and we hope to recoup our sponsors soon so that we may continue with our national sterilization ef-

forts," says Biemans.

Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami is a non-profit organization that uses 100% of its donations to offer partial or full subsidy for the sterilization procedure for house pets and strayed pets. Donations are extremely important for this foundation in order to continue its purpose.

For more information go to www.stimamisterilisami.com.

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NOORD — “My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch,” says Randolph Arends, owner of Aruba Living Today. Together with his business partner Berend Prenger and a dedicated team they practice what they preach: mediation in Real Estate with a high service level. “I am proud to state that so far all of my clients stayed with us. I am not selling a fairytale, in ten years of course there were challenges too but it is about how you handle those. It's like with family, you stick together with ups and downs. But the love is there.”

Services offered by Aruba Living Today are House and Land Sales, Rentals, Investments, Property Management, Vacation Rental, Mortgages, Insurances, Maintenance, Assist in Arrangements for Notary and Utilities, Guiding Bureaucracy Process and Assisting in Import of Furniture. Berend is also a certified Appraisal within the Dutch Kingdom meaning he does your appraisal report that is accepted by all banks and he delivers within three days. “This definitely speeds up the process of buying,” he says. This different approach of real estate is what sets Aruba Living Today apart and is also the reason why Randolph calls himself a property mediator instead of a real estate broker. “The personal touch is essential to me. I am stepping aside of the image that real estate brokers are only in for the commission. This image does not fit me at all, I am in for my passion and I can only do this from the heart.”

Testimonials

What better way to reinforce his words than sharing some of the amazing testimonials Aruba Living Today received from their clients. We made a selection for you because we lack space to publish them all.

J. 1987

“Randolph and his team helped us immensely to find our dream home on Aruba. Their service is excellent, before and after buying the house. His office also helped us with financing the property. Finding the perfect home is the goal, but what I found just as important during the whole process is Randolph's integrity. He really looks at what you need, doesn't make false claims and also advises you cor-



Aruba Living Today, real estate mediation: We believe in building a connection and constructing a future



rectly when it is not in his own interest. This makes you feel valued and in good hands.”

vanmullem1

“Without any doubt the best real estate agent on the island! Randolph helped out buying our property on the island, representing us as a buyer. The guy knows the island and most people in Aruba what is a great help. His after sales goes way beyond expected and included services like helping getting connected to water, electricity and gas. If needed he can help you find renters for your house and managing it, again with the same service and transparency. Summarizing, the guy and his company are our eyes and ears on the island if we are not there.”

Debora Zywusko

“My husband and I have been coming to Aruba for 30 years and have dreamed about owning our own home in Aruba. I was referred to Randolph from Aruba Living Today. I am a Realtor myself in the US for 38 years, so finding the right Realtor was the key. Randolph and his team has made this process a piece of cake. His integrity and honesty has made him a success, always available when we called or wanted to meet. Not only is he our Realtor, but a new lifelong friend!!! Be sure to call him.”

Frank Stolp

“Aruba Living Today is probably the best real estate agent on the island. Randolph and his team arranged long term rental houses for us, communication with them is always correct and they respond quickly. Absolutely recommend Aruba Living Today!”

Linda Kandel

“THE BEST! No other way to describe the way I was treated at this company. ABOVE AND BEYOND any expected services. 5 star all the way! Don't hesitate.”

The door is open

Aruba Living Today houses in an authentic Aruban house, welcoming you in a warm ambiance that emphasizes the philosophy of connecting. Candles, Buddha ornaments, magazines and a homey setting form the décor for you to sit and talk about your dream house or investment. Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40 % local buyers and 60 % foreign buyers. “Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages.” Besides that Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers. As a member of the Aruban Real Estate Association they are listed also on the website www.arubalisting.com within a group of 20 of the most advanced realtors on the island. Aruba Living Today is featured as well on television and you can find them on House Hunters, Social Media - Aruba Living Today and of course in Aruba Today's newspaper.



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Stocks wobble on Wall Street, hovering around record highs

By **DAMIAN J. TROISE** AP
Business Writer

Stocks wobbled on Wall Street Wednesday as investors looked over another big batch of earnings reports from U.S. companies. Wall Street is also looking ahead to an announcement in the afternoon from the Federal Reserve, which is expected to give its outlook on inflation and the economy and also detail how it plans to wind down its monthly bond purchases.

The S&P 500 fell 0.1% as of 1:10 p.m. Eastern. Stocks in the index were roughly split between gainers and losers. The Dow Jones Industrials fell 127 points, or 0.4%, to 35,925 and the Nasdaq rose 0.1%. All three set their latest record closing highs a day earlier.

Smaller-company stocks outpaced the broader market in a sign that investors were feeling confident about economic growth. The Russell 2000 rose 1%. It also set a record high on Tuesday.

Industrial companies posted some of the biggest losses. Agricultural equipment maker Deere fell 5.1%.



Workers at the company rejected a contract offer Tuesday that would have given them 10% raises and decided to remain on strike in the hopes of securing a better deal.

Health care and technology stocks also fell. U.S. crude oil prices fell 3.2%, but energy stocks were mixed.

Bond yields rose. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 1.57% from 1.54% late Tuesday.

Investors were handed a mixed bag of corporate report cards. Activision Blizzard slumped 15.1% after the maker of video games like "World of Warcraft" gave investors a disappointing profit forecast. Zillow Group dropped 22.8% after the real estate website operator reported disappointing financial results and said it is shutting down its home-flipping business. CVS Health rose 5.1% after the drugstore chain and

pharmacy benefits manager raised its profit forecast for the year following a strong third quarter. Mondelez International rose 1.4% after the maker of Oreo cookies reported solid third-quarter financial results.

Investors received an encouraging update on the services sector, which accounts for the bulk of economic activity. The Institute for Supply Management reported that the rate of ex-

pansion for the sector hit a record high in October.

Investors are also looking ahead to the latest statement from the Federal Reserve. The central bank will update Wall Street on its plans to begin paring its \$120 billion in monthly bond purchases that helped keep long-term loan rates low to encourage borrowing and spending. Investors will also be listening for any comments on longer-term plans to eventually raise benchmark interest rates. The Fed's latest statement comes amid persistent rising inflation that has cut into corporate operations and raised prices on raw materials.

It is also making finished goods more expensive, raising concerns about whether consumers will cut back on spending as prices rise.

The central bank and investors have also been closely monitoring the recovery in the employment market, which has been lagging the broader economic recovery. The Labor Department will release its jobs report for October on Friday. □

Italy-Croatia fight over Prosecco name gets ready to pop

PROSECCO, Italy (AP) — On tiny pockets of terraced terrain overlooking a bay shared by Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, Milos Skabar is reviving a centuries-old winemaking tradition known as Prosekar, which shares roots with its better-known bubbly cousin, Prosecco.

But this humble fizzy blend, virtually unknown beyond the Italian port city of Trieste where it's made on a strip of land between the Adriatic Sea and Slovenia, is caught up in a dispute that's about to pop: The makers of Italy's hugely popular sparkling wine Prosecco are fighting to prevent Croatian winemakers from using the name Prosek for their sweet dessert wine.

The handful of Prosekar makers hope to use their ties to Prosecco's birthplace, just above Trieste,

to gain greater recognition for their wine but worry their name is at risk, too.

"Prosekar wine is the original, because it was born 300 years before Prosecco," said Skabar, surveying his vineyard with a port view, the hills of Slovenia a dark green line in the distance. "So, it is the father of Prosekar, Prosecco, Prosek and all the rest."

At stake in the battle is not only the sanctity of Prosecco, the world's top-selling wine, but also the European Union's system of geographical designations created to guarantee the distinctiveness and quality of artisanal food, wine and spirits, defenders say. That market is worth nearly 75 billion euros (\$87 billion) annually — half of it in wines, according to a 2020 study by the European Commission, the EU's executive

branch.

The Italian government has pledged to defend Prosecco's name, and other makers of protected products with distinct geographic roots, from Italy's Parmigiano Reggiano cheese to France's Champagne, are mobilizing as the European Commission prepares to deliberate on Croatia's petition to label its niche wine with the traditional Prosek name.

"The problem for us is not that these producers, who make a very small number of bottles, enter our market. But it is the confusion it could generate among consumers," said Luca Giavi, general director of the Prosecco DOC consortium, which promotes Prosecco and assures the quality of wines under the EU's "denomination of controlled origin" designation.

Prosecco has annual sales of 2.4 billion euros (\$2.8 billion), most of it exported. "Everyone perceives the situation as a threat to our success," producer Stefano Zanette said, with worldwide buyers possibly not able to distinguish between the similar names.

Croatia argues that the Prosek name and tradition is centuries old, predating Prosecco's protections in the EU system, and that its place as a dessert wine makes it distinct from Prosecco.

"Consumers will not be confused by this," Ladislav Ilcic, a Croatian member of the European Parliament, said in a recent debate. "Prosek should legitimately receive the protected denomination of origin, and producers should have full access to markets."

The Brussels-based Euro-

pean Federation of Origin Wines is preparing a brief to support Italy. It believes the European Commission's decision to hear the case has defied its own battle to get other nations and trading blocs to recognize the EU's system of geographic designations.

The dispute, which will be decided in the coming months, is likely to turn on Prosecco's origin story, emanating from the bilingual Italian village of Prosecco near the Slovenian border above Trieste, where wine-making once flourished.

It is here, say the ethnic Slovene Italians who make Prosekar, that the grape known as Glera — the basis of both Prosecco and Prosekar — originated.

But besides common etymological roots, Prosekar, Prosecco and Prosek have little in common. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Lugged
- 6 Eat from the pasture
- 11 Emanations
- 12 Man of many words
- 13 Road reversal
- 14 Without help
- 15 Involve
- 17 Lobbying org.
- 19 Suffering
- 20 Bit of paint
- 23 Not active
- 25 Niagara's source
- 26 Drink garnish
- 28 Scots' caps
- 29 Bronze beater
- 30 Hot blood
- 31 Not strict
- 32 Mag. workers
- 33 Trio doubled
- 35 Godzilla's home
- 38 City on the Mohawk River
- 41 Plant pest
- 42 Caesar subject
- 43 Composer Kurt
- 44 Rival

DOWN

- 1 Letter after sigma
- 2 Ump's call
- 3 "Ripped from the headlines" genre
- 4 Bring home
- 5 Crown repairer
- 6 Knight's quest
- 7 Dice turn
- 8 In the past
- 9 Buddhism branch
- 10 Season on the Seine
- 16 Art Pepper's instrument
- 17 Singer LaBelle
- 18 Fighting

S	C	A	R	F	S	P	O	T
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A	B	I	D	E	T	A	L	O
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E	R	A	S	A	G	T	E	E
D	E	T	E	C	T	E	D	
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	D	E	J	E	C	T	E	D
P	A	W	N	A	T	T	A	R
I	D	I	O	C	Y	W	I	S
V	A	L	V	E	L	A	M	A
O	G	L	E	S	E	V	E	N
T	E	A	R		T	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer

- 20 Rush hour, to
- 21 Prepared to fire
- 22 Saloon orders
- 24 Snaky shape
- 25 Building wing
- 27 Permanent part
- 31 McEnroe rival
- 33 Enter the regatta
- 34 School near Windsor
- 35 Mouth part
- 36 Clumsy guy
- 37 Letter after upsilon
- 39 Turning part
- 40 One or more

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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43					44				

11-4

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-4

CRYPTOQUOTE

UPTQTONN PN EMO ZVTBRVBO

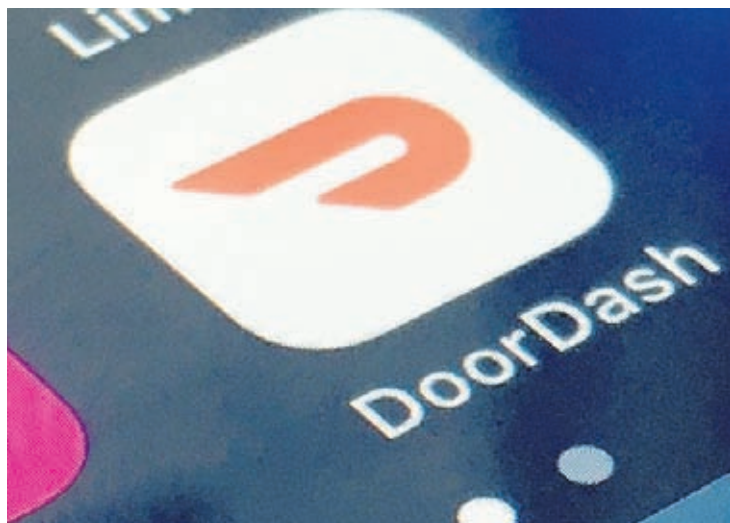
AMPJM EMO QOVL JVT MOVK

VTQ EMO CZPTQ JVT NOO.

— XVKU EAVPT

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: FOOLS STAND ON THEIR ISLAND OF OPPORTUNITIES AND LOOK TOWARD ANOTHER LAND. — HENRY DAVID THOREAU

DoorDash adds safety features to help protect drivers



By DEE-ANN DURBIN

DoorDash is adding security features to its app to help protect drivers. The San Francisco-based delivery company said Wednesday it's partnering with security company ADT on the new features, which will be available to all U.S. DoorDash drivers by the end of this year. Under the new system, DoorDash drivers who are feeling unsafe can connect to an ADT agent using a button in DoorDash's app. The agent will stay on the phone until the driver feels comfortable; if the driver stops communicating, ADT will call 911. DoorDash is also adding an emergency-assistance button to its app, which drivers can swipe to let ADT know

they need immediate help. ADT will contact 911 and then remain in touch with the driver via text messages. The enhanced safety follows several high-profile attacks on delivery drivers. In March, a 19-year-old DoorDash driver in Columbus, Ohio, was beaten after he got confused over an address. That same month, two Washington, D.C., teens assaulted an Uber Eats driver with a stun gun, causing his vehicle to crash and killing him. And in August, a DoorDash driver was shot to death while making deliveries in Maryland. DoorDash isn't the first delivery company to augment safety for drivers. Last year, Instacart added a button to its app that lets shoppers

contact emergency services directly if there's a problem. The app automatically shares the shopper's location with those services. Ride-hailing companies like Lyft and Uber also have in-app buttons to let riders and drivers contact emergency services in their apps. Lyft also has a partnership with ADT that was announced last year. Ronae Christensen, a DoorDash driver in Los Angeles County and a member of the company's driver council, says she thinks the safety buttons are a great idea. Christensen has driven for various companies, including Lyft and Uber, since June 2019, but now she drives exclusively for DoorDash for safety reasons. "Being a single woman, the thought of having someone else in here that I don't know leaves me feeling wide open," she said. Christensen said she has called DoorDash support once or twice because she felt unsafe. The operators helped her handle those situations, but she felt like they were far away, she said. "This tool is so much better," she said. "It's just going to be a very reassuring thing, especially as a woman." □

Australia regulator demands face-scanning firm delete photos

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

An Australian privacy authority has ordered facial recognition company Clearview AI to stop scanning the faces of Australians and destroy the images and related data it has already collected. It's the latest challenge for the New York startup that has angered privacy advocates around the world over its practice of "scraping" photos from social media to identify people wanted by police and other government agencies. Australian Information Commissioner and Privacy Commissioner Angelene

Falk said Wednesday that the company breached Australians' privacy by pulling their personal data from the web and disclosing it through its facial recognition tool. "The covert collection of this kind of sensitive information is unreasonably intrusive and unfair," Falk said in a written statement. "It carries significant risk of harm to individuals, including vulnerable groups such as children and victims of crime." Falk's office and its British counterpart jointly opened an investigation into Clearview last year. The Australian regulator

said it is ordering the company "to cease collecting facial images and biometric templates from individuals in Australia, and to destroy existing images and templates collected from Australia." In this case, biometric templates are digital or mathematical representations derived from images that can be matched against a database. Clearview said Wednesday it was appealing the decision and challenged whether the regulator has any jurisdiction over the company, which doesn't do business in Australia or have any customers there. □

Classifieds

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After 196 years, college grants tenure to a Black professor

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

Louisiana's oldest college is celebrating its first lifetime appointment to a Black faculty member, and discussing why this racial milestone took nearly two centuries to accomplish.

"I think that's the million-dollar question. It's something I know will be highlighted and discussed" at Centenary College of Louisiana's event Thursday honoring the now-tenured associate professor Andia Augustin-Billy, college spokeswoman Kate Pedrotty said.

Racism is why this took 196 years, said school archivist Scott Brown. "Structural and institutional and systemic racism has been present ever since the college was founded, largely by enslavers," he said.

This history is undeniable, but it's also in the past, said Christopher Holoman, president of the Methodist-affiliated college in Shreveport. "Any institution that is as old as Centenary, particularly one in the South, must take account of the role that racism played in its history," Holoman said. "As we move forward, Centenary is committed to full inclusion of all members of our community and working towards a just society."

Augustin-Billy, known on campus as "Dr. A-B," pro-



nounced "ah-bay," is an award-winning teacher of French and Francophone Studies who leads Centenary students on trips to Paris and Haiti, where she grew up as the daughter of missionaries.

She also teaches African and Caribbean literature and postcolonial, women, gender and sexuality studies to a student body described as 18% Black or Black and another race. That's slightly ahead of the national percentage of college-aged Blacks: 16.7% of U.S. residents age 18 through 24 in 2018, according to U.S. Census figures.

Zuri Jenkins, a Black senior majoring in international business, French and English who serves with Brown on the Diversity Committee, said she was both surprised and unsurprised when she was awarded tenure in

February.

Surprised because she's seen the school pushing for diversity — but then there's Centenary's history: It was not only built on slavery but admitted only white men for years thereafter, Jenkins said.

Centenary also was among the last in Louisiana to integrate, admitting its first Black students in 1966. Louisiana State University admitted its first black law student in 1950 and its first African American undergraduate in 1953. Louisiana Tech integrated in 1965 and Louisiana College, a small Baptist school, in 1967. Fred Bonner II, identified by Brown as Centenary's first Black professor, agreed that the school is burdened with past racism but said it's "really trying to move the needle in a positive direction."

Bonner has fond memories of Centenary in 1997-98, when he was an instructor during the last semester of his doctoral work at the University of Arkansas and then a visiting associate professor. At the time, he knew of only one Black student who wasn't on the basketball team. But he enjoyed weekly faculty dinners, and white students cheered when he earned his PhD and told them "I'm Dr. Bonner now."

The day after she was awarded tenure, Augustin-Billy asked the archivist if there had been any other tenured Black faculty, so she could thank them for paving her way.

"There was no one," she said.

There don't appear to be any national data on degree-granting schools which have never granted tenure to Blacks.

The first two African Americans to win tenure at predominantly white schools did so in 1947 and 1952, according to The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education. But according to National Center for Education Statistics data, dozens of universities and colleges have not reported having any tenured Black faculty members from 2012 to 2020.

All but three of those schools had fewer than

3,000 students. Centenary is among the smallest, with current enrollment at 523 and 54 full-time faculty members. Two full-time and one of 27 part-time faculty members identify as Black or African American, Pedrotty said.

"We don't employ a large number of faculty. Furthermore, African American faculty are in high demand. We do our best to be competitive with all our faculty hires," Holoman said.

African Americans made up 13.3% of college students nationwide in 2019, but only about 6% of faculty members, according to U.S. Education Department data. A study of 2003 data showed 47% of white full-time faculty held tenure, compared to 38.3% of Black full-time faculty, The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education reported.

Disputes over tenure for Black faculty focused this year on the University of North Carolina, which offered an endowed journalism professorship to Pulitzer-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones only to have tenure talks stall after a board member questioned her nonacademic background and a powerful donor objected. She eventually was offered tenure but took a position at Howard University. □

Tupac Shakur's life, legacy to be subject of massive exhibit

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tupac Shakur's handwritten lyrics from classic songs such as "California Love" and "Dear Mama" along with galleries that pay homage to his upbringing and late mother are among the features in a massive touring museum exhibit.

The Shakur Estate announced Tuesday that the "Tupac Shakur. Wake Me When I'm Free" will open Jan. 21 in Los Angeles. The exhibit is described as a fully immersive, thought-provoking museum experience that explores the life and legacy of the late rapper.

Shakur, one of the most prolific figures in hip-hop, died in 1996 from gunshot wounds. He was 25.

The exhibit is expected to spend six months in Los Angeles with the hopes of touring other cities.

"There are thousands of pieces of paper, handwritten pieces of paper — which is everything from his lyrics to all of the songs and poetry that you know down to a grocery list for a birthday party," said Aaron Saxe, president of Kinfolk Management + Media, who is working with Shakur's estate. Saxe has worked with estates for other iconic music artists including Otis Redding and Donny Ha-

thaway.

"The whole point of this exhibit was to not only show the kaleidoscopic nature of Tupac, but also show how he is relatable," Saxe continued. "There are incredible pieces of clothing. This exhibit is also a mix of contemporary art and technology too. Many of the artifacts have never been seen before."

The 20,000-square foot exhibit will showcase Shakur's music, poetry, wardrobe, activism journey and other items in galleries.

One of the galleries will be dedicated to the rapper's late mother, Afeni Shakur, the former Black Panther who inspired the work of

her son. She died in 2016. Saxe said Shakur's mother is the "guiding light" of the exhibition.

"Afeni was the baddest Black woman to walk the planet," said Jamal Joseph, the rapper's godfather and special advisor to the estate, in a statement. "She raised awareness and shifted the atmosphere wherever she went. Tupac's brilliance shined brighter than the sun. He lived and moved with creative - revolutionary - fearless-passion fueled speed of a comet. Afeni and Pac challenged, re-imagined, and transformed history."

Shakur's estate-sanctioned museum experience is pro-

duced in partnership with Universal Music Group, CAA, Round Room Live and Kinfolk Management + Media.

"Tupac Shakur was my Malcolm; he was my Martin, and to build an experience that honors such a prolific man, cannot be summed up in words," said Jeremy Hodges, whose firm, Project Art Collective, is working with The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on the creative portion of the exhibit. "We wanted to create a memorable experience that will inspire you to be better than when you walked in, all while leaving you with the knowledge that he was a true revolutionary spirit." □

Beckham excused from Browns practice, WR's future in doubt

By **TOM WITHERS** AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) — Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield was surprised — not hurt — by a video posted by Odell Beckham Jr.'s father that has created a rift with the team and could lead to the wide receiver's release.

Beckham may be down to his final hours with the Browns, who are meeting with the star's representatives to work out a resolution.

Beckham was excused from practice Wednesday, a day after Odell Beckham Sr. shared a video on social media — hours before the trade deadline — highlighting times when Mayfield didn't throw passes to the three-time Pro Bowler when he was open this season. The Browns may have made up their minds about Beckham, but Mayfield hasn't ruled out a reconciliation.

"I thought we had a very open line of communication going into it, so we'll see," Mayfield said following practice. "I was more surprised than anything (by the video) — as everybody was. We'll see going for-



ward.

"There's always room for improvement in any relationship, so we'll see."

Mayfield was asked if he could forgive Beckham.

"Yeah," he said. "I think any sort of conversation could go a long way."

While it appears Beckham's release may be imminent, the Browns could be trying to see if things can be fixed. Mayfield has not spoken with Beckham, but said he would be willing to move forward with him as a

teammate.

"I'm prepared to do whatever, and if he's back, then we'll work through it and do whatever it takes," he said. "I can put my ego and pride to the side to win, because that's all I care about is winning."

"But if not, then we'll roll with the guys we have out there. And those guys will know that I completely trust them. And they'll know that I'm always here for them. And that's the leader and that's the type of quarter-

back I am."

Mayfield said he didn't take the video too personally, and can appreciate the elder Beckham looking out for his son.

"Obviously, naturally, he wants his son to succeed," Mayfield said. "I can't blame him for that. I want Odell to succeed. That's where we were at, and at least I thought, so that's all I really have about that one."

Before practice, coach Kevin Stefanski said Browns

general manager Andrew Berry was in talks with Beckham's representatives about his future. Stefanski gave blanket answers to questions ranging from whether he would be waived or if things could be fixed.

"There's a lot of conversations that are ongoing between Andrew and his reps and I'm sure there's substantive talk towards all those things," Stefanski said. "We'll see where this goes." Stefanski was asked for the reason behind Beckham being excused from practice.

"Just felt that was the right thing to do," he said.

Stefanski said he has not spoken to Beckham, a clear sign of a major rift between the Browns and a controversial player with a history of being a distraction.

It's likely the Browns (4-4) are preparing to move on without the 28-year-old, who is under contract for two more seasons but is not guaranteed any money after 2021.

The Browns are in last place in the AFC North and visit the Cincinnati Bengals (5-3) this week. □

Soler, Freeman, Correa among 160 free agents who hit market

By **RONALD BLUM** AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Freddie Freeman, World Series MVP Jorge Soler and Eddie Rosario of the champion Atlanta Braves were among 160 players who became free agents Wednesday as an uncertain offseason started with a lockout threat looming.

Houston shortstop Carlos Correa and Astros pitcher Justin Verlander, who is recovering from Tommy John surgery, also became free agents.

Other stars who hit the market include Corey Seager, Trevor Story, Max Scherzer, Marcus Semien, Kris Bryant, Anthony Rizzo, Michael Conforto and Kevin Gausman.

About 50 additional players are potentially eligible, pending decisions on op-

tions in their contracts for 2022.

Free agents can negotiate contracts with any team starting Sunday evening.

Catcher Tucker Barnhart, whose contract includes a \$7.5 million club option, was traded Wednesday from Cincinnati to Detroit for infielder Nick Quintana. A decision is pending on Barnhart's option.

A slow market is expected as teams hesitate to make commitments before they know what the sport's economic structure will be next year. The collective bargaining agreement between Major League Baseball and the players' association expires Dec. 1, and a lockout appears likely.

Dodgers right-hander Trevor Bauer, who has been on paid leave since July 2 while he is investigated

under MLB's domestic violence policy, can opt out of the remaining two years in his contract, which calls for \$32 million salaries in 2022 and '23.

Boston designated hitter J.D. Martinez must decide on a player option as does Milwaukee outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr.

San Francisco has a club option on catcher Buster Posey.

Teams must decide by 5 p.m. EST Sunday whether to make \$18.4 million qualifying offers to their players who became free agents. A player is eligible for a qualifying offer only if he was with the team for the entire 2021 season and has not previously received a qualifying offer.

If a team makes a qualifying offer to a player who signs a major league contract



with another club before the amateur draft, his former club would receive a draft pick as compensation at the end of the first round or at the end of competitive balance round B. The placement depends on whether the new contract is worth \$50 million or more and the revenue-sharing and luxury tax status of the

team losing the player.

A free agent could be made a qualifying offer only if he had been with the same team continuously since opening day and had never received a qualifying offer before. Qualifying offers began after the 2012 season, and only seven of 96 offers have been accepted. □

Ryan looking for committee approach to fill in for WR Ridley

By **CHARLES ODUM** AP Sports Writer

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. (AP)

— Fantasy football fans trying to figure out which Atlanta Falcons wide receiver to plug in for Calvin Ridley should be warned.

The answer may change every week.

With Ridley out for an indefinite period of time while addressing mental health issues, quarterback Matt Ryan is preparing to pass to multiple players in Sunday's game at New Orleans.

Though Tajae Sharpe had five receptions in last week's 19-13 loss to Carolina as the fill-in for Ridley, Ryan isn't expecting any one player to have the lead role at wide receiver. "I think it's by committee," Ryan said Wednesday. "We want to get production by committee and try and use all of our guys in ways that can help us. We certainly have trust in Tajae. He's done a great job for us all year."

It would not be a surprise if Russell Gage, who had no passes thrown his way against Carolina, was Ryan's top option against New Orleans.



It also wouldn't be a surprise if rookie tight end Kyle Pitts, who had only two catches for 13 yards last week, returns to the production he showed by topping 100 yards each of the previous two games.

Perhaps the most consistent option for Ryan has been running back Cordarrelle Patterson, who has 601 combined rushing and receiving yards this season with seven touchdowns.

The only other Atlanta

players to have at least 600 scrimmage yards and seven touchdowns through seven games were running back Devonta Freeman in 2015 and wide receiver Andre Rison in 1990.

Patterson and another running back, Mike Davis, each had five catches last week. "You talk about getting production from not only different guys at the wide receiver group but different position groups," Ryan said. "We're lucky we

have versatile players, guys that can do a lot of different things. That's going to help us moving forward."

Ridley was a last-minute scratch against Carolina. During the game, Ridley posted an explanation on his Twitter account. He wrote "These past few weeks have been very challenging and as much as I'd like to be on the field competing with my teammates, I need to step away from football at this time

and focus on my mental wellbeing."

Ridley wrote the time away will "help me be the best version of myself now and in the future." He has provided no timetable on his return.

Asked Wednesday about Ridley's status for this week, Falcons coach Arthur Smith said "I don't know. Just like anyone with an injury, we'll get updates, we'll figure it out. I can't answer that because I don't know."

Ridley also missed the Falcons' 27-20 win over the New York Jets in London on Oct. 10 for what was then described only as personal reasons. He returned to make a touchdown catch in Atlanta's 30-28 win at Miami on Oct. 24.

Now with more known about the reason for Ridley's time away from the team, the Falcons are supporting their teammate.

When asked if he has reached out to Ridley, Ryan said "I think that's personal. I think the No. 1 thing is we all love and support him, wish him the best. Whenever it is that he's back here, we're going to welcome him back with open arms." □

Giants RB Saquon Barkley and 3 others in COVID-19 protocol



By **TOM CANAVAN** AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)

— New York Giants injured star running Saquon Barkley and two other starters did not practice Wednesday after being placed in the COVID-19 protocol along with assistant coach Burton Burns.

Safety Xavier McKinney and left guard Matt Skura also did not practice be-

cause of the virus which was detected on Tuesday after the team returned from a game in Kansas City against the Chiefs the previous night.

Because of the results, the Giants required all players, coaches, team personnel and management to retest on Wednesday.

Coach Joe Judge said 13 members of the organization tested positive for CO-

VID-19 on Tuesday. Burns was the only one in that group who tested positive when retested.

Barkley, who has missed the past three games with an ankle injury, McKinney and Skura were placed in the protocol after they tested positive on Wednesday. The players took a polymerase chain reaction test after the positive test to detect the genetic material of the virus. The results of that molecular test will be known Wednesday. They would then be tested again Thursday and the result would determine a course of action.

Safety Logan Ryan said players are looking at this as the norm for the 2020-2021 NFL seasons, which have been affected by the pandemic that emerged in early 2020. Players wear tracing monitors every day

when they are at the team facilities and are tested often. "When something like this comes up, I don't know how the results will come back. I'm not going to lose sleep on it. With all we experienced last season it's a different type of football than the last couple of years and you have to be able to adjust on the fly."

Burns, who turned 69 last week, and his wife are staying in their condo, Judge said. He would not say whether the coach was experiencing any symptoms. "As I told Burton, I said the one thing about this whole deal is you don't have to go somewhere to get it, it can come to you," Judge said. "You never know where it goes. So we've just got to do a good job of just staying up on symptoms, reporting symptoms."

The Giants (2-6) were sup-

posed to start practicing for Sunday's game at MetLife Stadium at 11:10 a.m. on Wednesday. The workout started around 11:45. Some players did not practice because of injuries and others because of the COVID-19 protocols.

Linebacker Lorenzo Carter (ankle), defensive back Nate Ebner (ankle), wide receivers Kenny Golladay (knee), Dante Pettis (shoulder) and Sterling Shepard (quad) did not practice because of injuries.

There was a line of about 20 players waiting to be tested at a trailer around 10:45 a.m. General manager Dave Gettleman also showed up to be tested.

Judge said the majority of Giants players are vaccinated. He would not say how many are not. The NFL requires team personnel to be vaccinated. □